HUERNIA LEACHII—A NEW SPECIES

By J. J. Lavranos.

(With Plates XXIX and XXX.)

Huernia Leachii Lavranos, sp. nov.

Floribus affinis *H. macrocarpae* Spreng. sed papillatione corollae densiore, caulibus longioribus procumbentibus cylindratisque differens; habitu affinis *H. pendulae* Bruce sed caulibus crassioribus acuminatibus, florum colore, lobis intermediis corollae minoribus, corona exteriore majore differens.

Caules decumbentes, tenus 150 cm. longi 5—8 mm. crassi, glabri, obscure quadrangulati et cylindrati habitu; folia 2—2½ mm. longa, acuta; flores 2—3 aggregati; bracteae lineares acutae 3—4 mm. longae; pedicelli circa 15 mm. longi, teretes, paene glabri; sepala acuminata 5—6 mm. longa, minute papillosula; corolla late campanulata, 15 mm. longa, inter apices loborum circa 20 mm. lata, extus pallide lutea, maculis minutis purpureis punctata et papillis albescentibus brevisque induta, intus pallide lutea, transversa fusco-purpura striata et anguste fusco-purpura marginata, ubique papillis parvis albescentibus vel purpureis induta; lobi deltoidei acuti 8—9 mm. longi, basi circa 10 mm. lati; lobi intermedii minuti, obsoleti; basis tubi uniforme fusco-purpurea, brevius papillata; corona exterior fusco-purpurea 3½—4 mm. diametro, basi tubi adpressa, lobis obscure crenulatis ad apices indentatis, latioribus quam longi; coronae interioris lobi 2½—3 mm. alti, basi fusco-purpurei, supra antheras incumbentes et conniventes, parte superiore flava, fusco-purpura marginata.

Portuguese East Africa, 10 miles south of Vila Pery on the Umtali–Beira Road, Leach 5641 (PRE, Holotype).

Distribution: For some miles south of the type locality but not otherwise recorded.

Stems decumbent or slightly ascending, up to 150 cm. long, 5—8 mm. thick, glabrous, green to purplish brown, obscurely 4-angled and almost cylindric in habit, with a transverse groove above each leaf.

Leaves 2—2½ mm. long, tooth-like, at right angles to the stem, persistent during two first years of growth.

Flowers two or three together from lower half (but not from base) of young stems, developed successively.

Bracts linear, acute, 3—4 mm. long.

Pedicel terete, reddish purple, about 15 mm. long, almost glabrous with a few small wart-like dots.

Sepals linear-acuminate, 5—6 mm. long, minutely papillate, 3-nerved.

Corolla broadly campanulate, 15 mm. long, approximately 20 mm. broad between apices of lobes; *lobes* deltoid-acuminate, about 10 mm. broad at base, 8—9 mm. long; outer surface with 5 nerves, the median nerve very prominent and ridge-like; intermediate lobes minute, almost absent; *outer surface* cream coloured, rather rough, fairly densely covered with minute purple dots and short whitish papillae; *inner surface* cream with continuous transverse dark purple bands, narrowly margined with dark purple, covered with little bristle-like purple or whitish papillae throughout; base of tube almost uniformly dark-purple, where the papillae are shorter than elsewhere.

Outer corona dark purple, adpressed against corolla-tube, $3\frac{1}{2}$—4 mm. in diameter, the lobes broader than long with obscurely crenulate margins and a shallow indentation at their apices.

Inner corona lobes $2\frac{1}{2}$—3 mm. high, dark purple at base, incumbent upon the anthers and connivent, the upper half yellow, margined with dark purple.

In floral characters *H. Leachii* appears to be most closely allied to *H. macrocarpa* Spreng. from Eritrea. Both species have a broadly campanulate corolla, yellowish with transverse dark purple bands and very small intermediate lobes. The transverse dark purple bands appear to be broader and more continuous and the inner corolla-surface more densely papillate in the new species while in the latter the papillation extends to the corolla-tube which is not the case with *H. macrocarpa*. The structure and even the colour of inner and outer corona are practically identical in both species. In habit, however, there is a wide difference between these two species, the stems of *H. Leachii* being decumbent, very long, relatively thin, almost cylindrical and tapering to a rather acute point, while *H. macrocarpa* has much shorter, thicker, 4—7-angled erect stems with very prominent teeth.

H. Leachii resembles *H. pendula* Bruce in habit, but the flowers of the latter species are smaller, uniformly dark purple-brown on the inner corolla-surface, with prominent intermediate corolla-lobes and a relatively smaller outer corona. Moreover, the stems of *H. pendula* are thinner and less tapering than in the new species from which they also differ by the absence of the short tooth-like leaves.

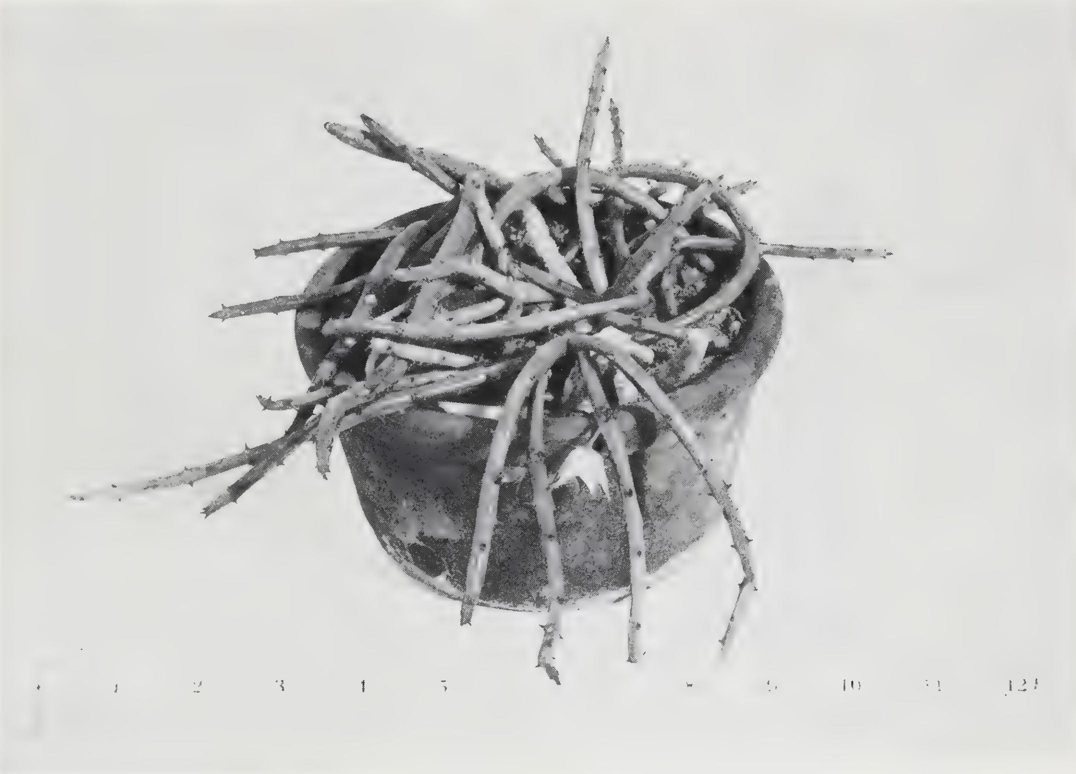

Plate XXIX.
Huernia Leachii Lavranos sp. nov.
Photograph: Division of Botany, Pretoria.

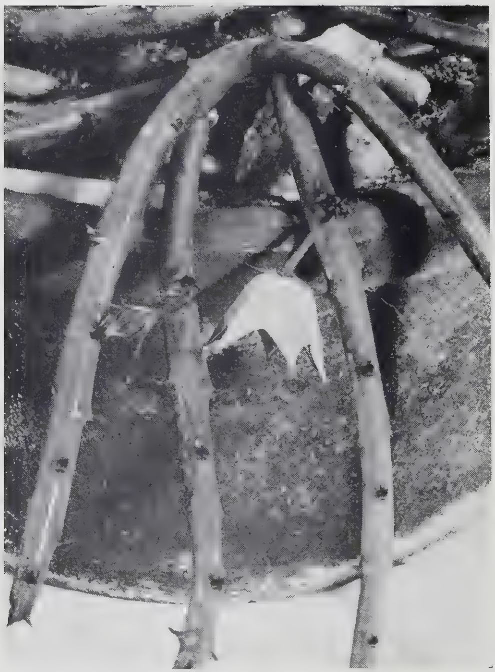

Plate XXIX A.
Huernia Leachii Lavranos sp. nov., actual size.
Photograph: Division of Botany, Pretoria.

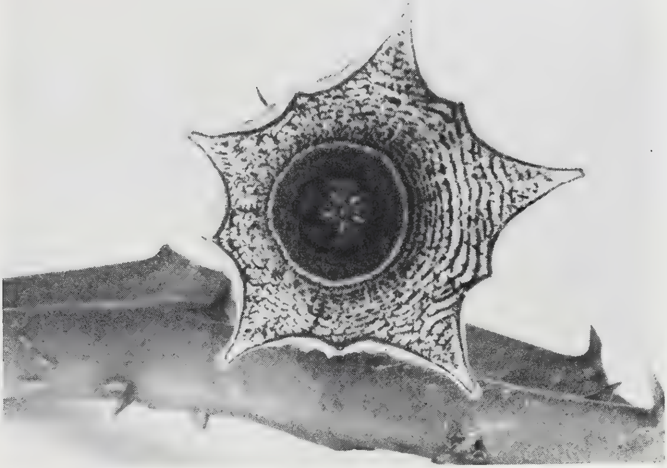

PLATE XXX.
Huernia Leachii Lavranos sp. nov. Enl. × 3.
Photograph: Division of Botany, Pretoria.

H. Leachii clearly belongs to the section *Plagiostelma* K. Schum. in view of the structure of the inner corona and must, for the same reason, be placed in White and Sloane's *macrocarpa-brevirostris* group.

This interesting new species was first collected in 1956 by Mr. L. C. Leach of P.O. Greendale, Southern Rhodesia, growing on the lower slopes of a large granite kopje 10 miles south of Vila Pery in Portuguese East Africa, in association with *Euphorbia* sp. aff. *E. memoralis* R. A. Dyer. *Aloe cameronii* and a succulent Plectranthus. Mr. Leach writes us: "The plants were growing in the peat-like rootmasses of coarse perennial grasses, the stems trailing or erect, supported by the grass, only the tips of the stems showing. The longest stem I measured was 5 feet long. The humidity of the area would appear to be high".

Living material was sent by Mr. Leach to the Division of Botany at Pretoria and flowered in the author's garden at Bryanston, Johannesburg, in mid-April 1959, when this description was drawn up and photographs taken.

The author wishes to thank the Chief, Division of Botany, Pretoria, and his staff for the living material, the photographs accompanying this text, for allowing him to study herbarium material of many species of Huernia for reasons of comparison, and for reading and correcting this description.

Finally, he wishes to express his appreciation for much valuable information and for additional living material to Mr. L. C. Leach, after whom this remarkable species is named.